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Sustainable development: Protection of global climate for present and future generations

Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

Convention on Biological Diversity

Implementation of United Nations environmental conventions

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the reports submitted by the secretariats of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

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I. Report of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on the United Nations Climate Change Conference, Poznan, 2008, and its follow-up

A. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 63/32, invited the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change[1] to report to it at its sixty-fourth session on the work of the Conference of the Parties. The present report is submitted in response to that invitation.

B. Outcomes of the fourteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and of the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol

1. Summary

2. The United Nations Climate Change Conference was held in Poznan, Poland, from 1 to 12 December 2008. The Conference marked the halfway point on the road to Copenhagen and was described as an important "bridge from Bali to Copenhagen". It included the following:

(a) Fourteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;

(b) Fourth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol;[2]

(c) Fourth session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention;

(d) Resumed sixth session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol;

(e) Twenty-ninth session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation;

(f) Twenty-ninth session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice.

The Conference of the Parties adopted seven formal decisions and the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol adopted six decisions. These decisions will help to promote progress towards a broader agreement at Copenhagen.

3. While the 2007 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali was influenced by the release of the fourth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and a sense of urgency to act on climate change, the

[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

[2] The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change has been ratified to date by 192 parties, and the Kyoto Protocol has been ratified by 187 parties.

Poznan Conference coincided with the financial crisis and the beginning of an economic downturn, leading to concerns that action on climate might fall victim to the crisis. In spite of this, the message that emerged from Poznan was one of progress on climate change issues and for an economic recovery that develops green investment strategies and achieves green growth.

4. Thus, the success of the Poznan Conference was to maintain progress on the road to Copenhagen against the backdrop of a global economic downturn and, remarkably, to agree on work programmes for both of the Ad Hoc Working Groups for the year 2009, which includes three additional sessions this year. Other achievements included adoption of the Poznan strategic programme on technology transfer and the full operationalization of the Adaptation Fund. These measures provide insights into possible governance architecture that a Copenhagen outcome could achieve.

5. Poznan further highlighted the importance of meeting the objectives laid out by the Bali road map processes. One of the objectives is to bridge the gap between the emission reductions required by science and those considered to be economically, technically and politically possible. An important focus of this discussion was to consider "a shared vision for long-term cooperative action" under the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention.

6. Most importantly, the deliberations in Poznan resulted in a realization that success in Copenhagen is dependent on achieving clarity on:

(a) Emission reduction targets for industrialized countries;

(b) Nationally appropriate mitigation actions by developing countries;

(c) New and additional financial resources and access to adequate and predictable financing;

(d) Institutional structures including governance structures that are founded in equity.

2. Progress in negotiations towards Copenhagen

7. In Poznan, it became evident that the Copenhagen outcome needed to provide a long-term framework for setting the long-term ambitions of both developed and developing countries. The development of such a long-term global goal for emission reductions was highlighted as a key aspect of a "shared vision", and the parties discussed this at a workshop of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention and an informal ministerial round table organized by the President of the fourteenth session of the Conference of the Parties. In 2009, the parties will continue to discuss and gain an understanding of this important element.

8. In advancing the Bali Action Plan, the fourth session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention adopted conclusions on its work programme for the year 2009 and agreed to shift into full negotiating mode. In doing so, the Ad Hoc Working Group invited its Chair to prepare a document for consideration at its fifth session to further focus the negotiating process on the fulfilment of the Bali Action Plan and the components of the agreed outcome to be adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its fifteenth session. To

achieve this goal, the Ad Hoc Working Group agreed that this document would encompass all aspects of the Bali Action Plan in a balanced manner, including a negotiating text. The fourteenth session of the Conference of the Parties welcomed the progress made by the Ad Hoc Working Group and its determination to shift into full negotiating mode in 2009. It also welcomed the invitation to the parties to provide further proposals to review and assess the scope and progress of negotiations at the sixth session of the Ad Hoc Working Group, to be held in June 2009.

9. In 2009, the Ad Hoc Working Group convened at its fifth and sixth sessions. At its fifth session, held from 29 March to 8 April 2009, the Chair introduced the focus document requested of him in Poznan. At its sixth session, held from 1 to 12 June 2009, the Chair presented a negotiating text, which was accepted by the parties as a starting point for the negotiations. The parties conducted readings of the text, which resulted in a revised negotiating text that will be considered in further meetings in the second half of this year. At the same session, the Chair also convened informal consultations that resulted in a useful exchange of views on the legal form or forms of the agreed outcome, and provided an opportunity for clarification of procedural aspects. Finally, five parties made formal proposals for a protocol under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change pursuant to article 17 of the Convention.

10. In 2007, the open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol agreed to forward the results of its work to the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol with a view to their adoption. To this end, at Poznan, the Ad Hoc Working Group adopted a work programme that outlines all issues to be considered in its work through to Copenhagen. These issues include the scale of emission reductions to be achieved by Annex I Parties in aggregate and individually; emissions trading and the project-based mechanisms; land use, land-use change and forestry; and a number of technical and methodological issues. The Group also requested its Chair to develop two notes, one on possible elements for amendments, pursuant to article 3, paragraph 9, of the Kyoto Protocol; and one on possible elements of a text relating to issues outlined in the report of its resumed sixth session.

11. This year, the Ad Hoc Working Group has held its seventh and eighth sessions. At its seventh session, held from 29 March to 8 April 2009, the Group considered the notes referred to above. With a view to intensifying its work, the Group requested its Chair to prepare a proposal for amendments to the Kyoto Protocol pursuant to its article 3, paragraph 9; and a text on other issues outlined in the report on its resumed sixth session. The eighth session of the Ad Hoc Working Group took place from 1 to 12 June 2009. The Group considered the two documents prepared by the Chair and ensured that these correctly reflected the proposals by parties. A number of parties also submitted formal proposals for amendments to be communicated six months before their adoption, in accordance with articles 20, paragraph 2, and 21, paragraph 3, of the Kyoto Protocol.

3. Progress on ongoing implementation

12. The progress made in the aforementioned negotiations is closely linked to efforts to advance the ongoing implementation of the Convention and the Kyoto

Protocol. These implementation efforts also help to lay the groundwork for enhanced action on climate change. Some of these measures have been identified below.

13. A significant achievement of the Poznan Conference was the adoption of the "Poznan strategic programme on technology transfer" of the Global Environment Facility. The programme was initiated in response to the request of the Conference of the Parties at its thirteenth session, held in Bali, and is a first step towards scaling up the level of investment for technology transfer to help developing countries address their needs for environmentally sound technologies. To this end, a programme was recently launched to provide $60 million in financing for technology transfer projects submitted by developing countries and to support the conduct and update of their technology needs assessments.

14. Another important decision made in Poznan was when the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol adopted the strategic priorities, policies and guidelines of the Adaptation Fund and agreed that the Adaptation Fund Board should be conferred the legal capacity to enable eligible parties to access resources from the Adaptation Fund. Thus, the fourth session was able to put finishing touches on the Adaptation Fund under the Kyoto Protocol, thereby enabling the Fund, in the course of 2009, to finance concrete adaptation projects and programmes in developing countries that are parties to the Kyoto Protocol. The funding for projects and programmes will be available at national, regional and community levels.

15. The Expert Group on Technology Transfer also presented three interim reports on performance indicators, financing options and a long-term strategy to facilitate the development, deployment, diffusion and transfer of technologies under the Convention. The overall objective of this work, and that of the work on performance indicators in general, is associated with an agreed outcome in the context of the Group's review and assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation of article 4, paragraph 1 (c) of the Convention and with the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention.

16. Work progressed at the twenty-ninth session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice on the issue of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. The Subsidiary Body recommended a programme of work on methodological issues related to a range of policy approaches and positive incentives to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries. This work on methodological issues is to be completed with a recommendation for a draft decision to be adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its fifteenth session. Work is also progressing under the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention, which is considering policy approaches and positive incentives to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and related issues, as part of wider negotiations to reach an agreed outcome in Copenhagen.

17. Activities under the Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change are ongoing and, since Poznan, the implementation of the programme has been in full swing. Continuous efforts to engage stakeholders have resulted in the addition of 11 new organizations, bringing the total number of partner organizations to 133 (as at 1 May 2009), and the receipt of 21 action pledges made by 14 organizations, for a total of 82 pledges. The activities undertaken by

these organizations has furthered the understanding of scientific and technical knowledge under the nine areas of the Nairobi work programme and thus contributed to efforts to make informed decisions on adaptation. The broad support and interest of parties in the Nairobi work programme as a knowledge-sharing and learning mechanism on global adaptation is evident from the discussions of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention. Activities catalysed, as well as knowledge and information generated through the Nairobi work programme, are particularly relevant to the two areas of work under the Ad Hoc Working Group: climate-related risks and extreme events; and adaptation planning and practices. The Group stands to gain valuable experience from the progress made in the implementation of the Nairobi work programme.

18. With regard to capacity-building in developing countries under the Convention, the Conference of the Parties requested the Subsidiary Body for Implementation to prepare a draft decision on the outcome of the second comprehensive review of the capacity-building framework in accordance with the agreed terms of reference for that review. An important objective of the second comprehensive review is to take stock of progress in, and assess the effectiveness of, the implementation of capacity-building activities directly relating to the capacity-building framework. This draft decision is to take into account deliberations at the thirtieth session of the Subsidiary Body (June 2009) on further steps to regularly monitor and evaluate capacity-building activities. The Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention is also considering capacity-building in its draft negotiating text as a pertinent cross-cutting issue and an essential means of implementation, together with financial resources and technology, to support enhanced action on mitigation and adaptation in developing countries.

19. The second review of the Kyoto Protocol pursuant to its article 9 was conducted at the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, in accordance with the decision taken at its second session, held in Nairobi. The fourth session was unable to reach an agreement on this review, however, and concluded its work without adopting a decision.

20. The fourth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol recognized the rapidly expanding portfolio of clean development mechanism project activities. By Poznan, the mechanism had registered a total of 1,186 project activities, bringing the total number of certified emission reductions to 202,845,016. The projects that entered the mechanism pipeline in 2006 will result in an estimated $25 billion in capital investment. The mechanism has thus provided an important source of investment and financial flows for mitigation in developing countries. The mechanism has also made an important contribution to the Adaptation Fund through the 2 per cent levy on mechanism project activities. In giving further guidance on the mechanism, the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol provided an overall strategic framework for increasing its efficiency and responding to the many specific requests made under this framework, and requested the Executive Board of the clean development mechanism to report back to the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol on the actions taken and with recommendations for building upon or changing the guidance previously given to the Board.

21. With respect to equitable regional and subregional distribution of clean development mechanism project activities, the parties emphasized the need for further efforts by enhancing capacity-building and streamlining the process for least developed countries, small island developing States and Africa. The Nairobi Framework, a multi-agency initiative that focuses on capacity-building for the mechanism, has made some notable progress. Last year the partner agencies presented a new joint programme proposal to scale up activities to catalyse the mechanism in Africa, the implementation of which depends on the availability of funds.

22. The implementation of the Convention continues, with 134 developing countries having submitted their initial national communications, 10 their second national communications and 1 their third national communications. In addition, 121 developing countries are presently preparing their second national communications, which will include information relating to greenhouse gas inventories, vulnerability and adaptation assessments and mitigation analysis. Industrialized countries (Annex I Parties) were requested to submit their fourth national communications to the secretariat by 1 January 2006. As at 14 July 2009, 40 out of 41 Annex I Parties had submitted their fourth national communication.

23. As at 14 July 2009, 41 out of the 48 least developed countries had submitted their national adaptation programmes of action identifying priority activities that respond to their urgent and immediate needs with regard to adaptation to the adverse effects of climate change.

24. The fourth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol also requested the secretariat to establish and maintain an international transaction log in order to verify the validity of transactions on Kyoto Protocol units. A total of 35 Annex B Party registries and the clean development mechanism registry are connected to the log, which ensures the integrity of 58 billion Kyoto Protocol units and has processed 170,000 transactions as at 24 July 2009.

4. High-level segment

25. The joint high-level segment of the fourteenth session of the Conference of the Parties and the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol was opened by the President of the Conference of the Parties. The high-level segment was also addressed by the President of Poland, the President of Guyana, the Prime Minister of Tuvalu, the Prime Minister of Sweden, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

26. The Secretary-General reiterated his commitment that the United Nations system would provide assistance to parties in every way possible and promised to support parties throughout the negotiating period and to help implement the outcomes.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

27. **The General Assembly may wish to:**

(a) **Take note of the report of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as transmitted by the Secretary-General;**

(b) **Note the outcomes of the fourteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and of the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, hosted by the Government of Poland from 1 to 12 December 2008;**

(c) **Pledge its support to the negotiating processes under the Bali road map and encourage progress towards reaching an agreed outcome in Copenhagen;**

(d) **Invite the Executive Secretary to continue to report to it on the work of the Conference.**

II. Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 63/218 and the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

A. Introduction

1. In its resolution 63/218, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its sixty-fourth session on the implementation of that resolution, including a report on the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa. The present report constitutes an update to the Assembly on the principal activities that have been undertaken since the adoption of the resolution, including on the implementation of the Convention.

B. Implementation of resolution 63/218, including the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

1. Background

2. In its resolution 63/218, the General Assembly reaffirmed its resolve to support and strengthen the implementation of the Convention, taking into account the ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008-2018), with a view to addressing the causes of desertification and land degradation, and invited all parties, the secretariat of the Convention and other institutions and supporting bodies to cooperate and coordinate their activities for a successful implementation of the strategic plan. It also invited all parties to report on progress made in the implementation of the strategic plan. The Assembly also invited developed-country parties to the Convention and other Governments, multilateral organizations, the private sector and other relevant organizations to make resources available to affected developing countries for the implementation of the Convention. The Assembly also extended its support to the efforts of the Executive Secretary to bring about the administrative renewal and reform of the secretariat and to realign its functions in order to fully implement the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit and bring them into line with the strategic plan to enhance the implementation of the Convention. The Assembly further noted the request made by the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Joint Inspection Unit to conduct an assessment of the Global Mechanism of the Convention and submit it to the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties and looked forward to the findings of the Unit.

3. Further, the Assembly invited the Executive Secretary, in coordination with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations secretariat, to actively prepare for and participate in the seventeenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development with a view to ensuring that the core issues of the

Convention, in particular those relating to land degradation, drought and desertification, were duly considered in the context of sustainable development during the deliberations of the policy session.

2. Ten-year strategic plan and its implementation

Context

4. The ten-year strategic plan was the final outcome of an extensive process which originated at the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, held in Havana in 2003 and was adopted by the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties, held in Madrid in 2007.

5. While parties have a leading role in implementing the strategic plan, the secretariat has worked to create the necessary conditions for the successful implementation of the strategic plan by, inter alia: (a) developing a reporting and review system based on impact indicators for the strategic objectives and performance indicators for the operational objectives; (b) undertaking a corporate review/reform process involving the move by the bodies and institutions of the Convention to results-based management and related programming and budgeting; (c) reshaping the operations of the Committee on Science and Technology; (d) reviewing the terms of reference of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention; (e) reviewing modalities for regional coordination mechanisms; (f) developing guidelines for the participation of civil society in Convention processes; (g) creating a comprehensive communications strategy; and (h) helping to align action programmes with the strategic plan.

3. Seventh session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention and first special session of the Committee on Science and Technology

6. The seventh session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention was held in Istanbul, Turkey, back-to-back with the first special session of the Committee on Science and Technology, from 3 to 14 November 2008.

Seventh session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

7. At the seventh session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, which immediately followed the first special session of the Committee on Science and Technology, delegates agreed on reporting principles that would measure progress in the implementation of the Convention. Through the analysis of performance and impact indicators, affected countries and development partners would understand what does and does not work in implementing the Convention. In this respect, assessments of national capacity to implement the new reporting system would be conducted in all regions in order to design a comprehensive capacity-building approach.

8. The new reporting format would provide opportunities for affected country parties to address their successes and constraints in implementing the Convention and the strategic plan. For developed country parties, future reporting would focus on providing information on the extent to which the Convention has been mainstreamed into their development cooperation strategies.

9. Another significant step was the concrete proposal to strengthen the integration of civil society organizations into the review process.

10. Important deliberations also took place with regard to the review and monitoring system, the subsidiary bodies and institutions assisting the process, as well as the format of future meetings of the Committee. The main institutional and procedural reforms required by the ten-year strategic plan were outlined in Istanbul, and are to be completed and put into action at the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties.

First special session of the Committee on Science and Technology

11. At the first special session of the Committee on Science and Technology, its members took significant steps to address the scientific problems within the Convention process. In this regard, the Committee identified the steps necessary to select a minimum set of impact indicators to measure progress on strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of the strategic plan. These impact indicators are to create a common standard that would make analysis feasible at the national and global levels, which would also increase the effectiveness of the implementation of the Convention.

12. Delegates confirmed that the participation of national science and technology correspondents in the activities of the Committee would enhance its work. The Committee carried out a global consultation of affected parties, through their national focal points and correspondents, on currently utilized impact indicators to be used as a reference for the selection of the minimum set of impact indicators. The recommended set of impact indicators would be discussed during the scientific segment of the regional meetings and submitted to the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties for consideration.

13. The ninth session of the Committee will be held on the margins of the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties and under its auspices the First Scientific Conference will be organized by the selected consortium, in collaboration with the secretariat of the Convention and under the lead of the Bureau of the Committee. The selected theme of the conference is "Biophysical and socio-economic monitoring and assessment of desertification and land degradation to support decision-making in land and water management". The new scientific and technical conference-style format of the Committee is aimed at improving the flow of scientific knowledge into the Convention's processes. By providing an interface with the global science community, the Committee will produce sound scientific outputs and policy-oriented recommendations to inform policy formulation and dialogue at the Conference of the Parties.

4. Partnership agreements

14. The secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa has been actively exploring partnerships and collaboration with agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). To this end, a corporate retreat was organized in Bonn on 4 and 5 June 2009, with the participation of senior staff from both organizations and hosted by the Convention secretariat. The objective of the retreat was to build common ground and a corporate framework for partnerships to combat desertification and land degradation and to mitigate the effects of drought. As a

result of the retreat, the Convention secretariat and UNDP have agreed to establish a strategic working partnership, motivated by the urgent need to draw attention to and catalyse international cooperation to address the needs of the 1 billion poorest people living in the drylands, in particular under scenarios of climate change. This partnership will build on the complementarities and respective comparative advantages of the two institutions. UNDP and the Convention secretariat have agreed to collaborate on a range of programmatic actions with the overall aim of reducing poverty by enhancing ecosystem functions and services in the drylands.

5. Assessment of the Global Mechanism of the Convention by the Joint Inspection Unit

15. As mandated by the Conference of the Parties, the Joint Inspection Unit conducted a review entitled "Assessment of the Global Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification". This mandate was carried out from January to June 2009. The report has recently been issued and will be considered by the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties for appropriate action.

6. Synergies between the three Rio Conventions

16. The Executive Secretary participated actively in the ninth meeting of the Joint Liaison Group of the three Rio Conventions. The meeting was held in the Joint Liaison Office of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the Convention on Biological Diversity in New York on 14 May on the sidelines of the seventeenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The Executive Secretaries of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change also participated in the meeting. The Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification briefed the Group on recent activities, including the adoption of the ten-year strategic plan by the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties, the seventh session of the Committee for the Review of Implementation of the Convention, the first special session of the Committee on Science and Technology, as well as the first and second meetings of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Harmonized Reporting. He also briefed the group on the Convention initiative to organize a Land Day event on 6 June 2009 on the margins of the climate change talks in Bonn in order to provide a forum for interface between climate change negotiators and stakeholders concerned with land issues. He also drew attention to the need for work, at least on a pilot basis, on joint implementation of national action programmes under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in some countries in an effort to demonstrate joint action by the Rio Conventions and respond to calls from parties for greater synergies, particularly at the national level.

7. The seventeenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and its preparatory processes

17. As mandated by both the Conference of the Parties and the United Nations General Assembly, the secretariat of the Convention and the Executive Secretary participated actively in the deliberations of the seventeenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, which convened in New York from 4 to 15 May 2008. The meeting was preceded by a number of intersessional activities, in which the Secretariat participated actively.

Bangkok and Windhoek intersessional meetings

18. The first intersessional meeting was held in Bangkok from 28 to 30 January 2009 on the theme "Improving agricultural productivity, water use efficiency and strengthening rural livelihoods". The Executive Secretary participated as a keynote speaker. In his statement, he addressed two important issues: the interlinkages between desertification, agriculture and water use, and the response of the Convention in improving rural livelihoods.

19. A second intersessional meeting was held in Windhoek from 9 to 10 February 2009 at the ministerial level and addressed the theme: "African agriculture in the 21st Century: meeting the challenges, making a sustainable green revolution". The Executive Secretary attended the meeting and stated that the operationalization of a sustainable green revolution in Africa must address land degradation including by reclaiming degraded/dry lands and using to its fullest extent the only existing legally binding international treaty on land issues (the Convention) which could assist countries in assessing and monitoring progress made in that regard.

20. The core issues of the Convention were fully reflected in the Windhoek high-level ministerial declaration on "African agriculture in the twenty-first century: meeting the challenges, making a sustainable green revolution".

Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting

21. The secretariat of the Convention participated actively in the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting, held in New York from 23 to 27 February 2009, and made presentations in panel discussions on land and desertification. The Executive Secretary addressed the panel on land, where he underscored the role of land in coping with today's global challenges and crises, including poverty eradication through pro-poor policies on sustainable land and water management; food crisis and hunger; water scarcity; climate change; biodiversity conservation through improvement of conditions of land ecosystems; avoiding deforestation; renewable energy; opportunities to invest in/for the people living in degraded lands; and avoiding forced migrations by improving land productivity.

22. In its panel presentation on desertification, the secretariat focused on demonstrating that investing in the implementation of the ten-year strategic plan was a win-win endeavour for achieving sustainable development, and tabled several recommendations. The core issues of the Convention were reflected in the text prepared by the Chair, which constituted the basis for negotiations in the seventeenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and included recognition of the benefits of sustainable land management in contributing to poverty eradication, food security and sustainable development, and in providing ecosystem services and regulating climate. Other recommendations included scaling up the dissemination of science-based practices to enhance sustainable land management, the establishment of centres of excellence in developing countries on land management and the development of global land indicators.

Seventeenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development)

23. The secretariat actively participated in the deliberations of the seventeenth session of the Commission and organized or co-hosted a number of side events, such as "Climate change in African drylands: adaptation and mitigation options" hosted

by the Convention secretariat, UNDP and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); "Erosion and soil organic matter decline as elements of soil degradation" organized by the Czech Presidency of the European Union and Spain; "The role of farmers in combating desertification, land degradation and drought" co-hosted with the International Federation of Agricultural Producers and the secretariat and "Land Degradation and Public Security" co-hosted by Spain and the Convention secretariat. On this occasion, an issue paper entitled "Securitizing the ground, grounding security" was circulated. The secretariat also attended a side event organized by the Government of Germany on "Experiences applying the strategic environmental assessment for communal planning in Honduras". On the fringes of the session, the secretariat mounted a substantial exhibition entitled "An uncertain future: living with desertification", which depicted the human impacts of desertification through the voices of communities vulnerable to desertification, land degradation and drought. The exhibition stand, which featured posters, documents and Convention memorabilia attracted many visitors.

24. The outcome documents of the session fully address the core issues of the Convention. On the issue of land, the Commission encouraged the development of policy measures to reduce land degradation that also contribute to poverty eradication and the creation of employment opportunities in developing countries, and recommended conserving and protecting land and soil resources through sustainable development measures in rural and urban areas.

25. The Commission also called for the implementation of policies that address the direct and indirect drivers of land degradation, such as desertification, erosion, loss of soil organic matter, salinization, pollution and unsustainable urban growth, and that lead to the recovery of the physical integrity of the soil, improving its nutrient status and increasing the amount of organic matter it contains. The session called on all countries to work together to strengthen capacities, especially in developing countries, to apply new and existing tools and technologies for monitoring soil quality and land degradation, including by addressing the lack of current data on the extent of land degradation, and evaluating biophysical and socio-economic information.

26. On the issue of drought, the session underlined the role of the Convention as the legal framework for mitigating the effects of drought and called, inter alia, for strengthening the knowledge base and information-sharing on drought, water stress and drought risk management, enhancing the resilience of communities to drought through capacity-building, technology transfer and financing.

27. On the issue of desertification, the session recognized that combating desertification and land degradation and mitigating the effect of droughts required policies that link, inter alia, land use, food security and livelihoods to the goals of sustainable development. The session therefore called for strengthening the institutional framework for policy implementation, implementing practical measures to combat land degradation and desertification, and enhancing capacity-building, technology transfer and financing. In addition, it proposed to enhance cooperation among the three Rio Conventions, and called upon Governments and relevant multilateral organizations, including the Global Environment Facility implementation agencies, to integrate desertification and land degradation into their plans and strategies for sustainable development and to integrate national action plans related to drought and desertification into national development strategies, and

ensure that national action plans in small island developing States address the desertification of coastal areas.

28. On capacity-building, transfer technology and financing, the session called, inter alia, for efforts to promote scientific research and strengthen the scientific base on desertification and drought, which is essential for making informed decisions on sustainable land management and for measuring the results and monitoring the impact of programmes combating desertification.

29. The session called for the mobilization of adequate, predictable and timely financial resources for the implementation of the ten-year strategic plan of the Convention in accordance with its article 20 and invited the Council of the Global Environment Facility to provide in the fifth replenishment of the Facility adequate, timely and predictable financial resources, including new and additional financial resources, for the focal area on land degradation.

30. The session also acknowledged the nexus between climate change and desertification and supported the integration of climate change adaptation measures and disaster risk reduction strategies in agricultural and rural development strategies, sustainable land management and action plans to combat drought and desertification, in particular in developing countries. It also called upon Member States to strengthen the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and encouraged enhanced coherence among United Nations programmes, funds, agencies and entities working on desertification, drought and land issues, in cooperation with the Convention secretariat.

8. Observance of 2009 World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought

31. In its resolution 49/115, the General Assembly proclaimed 17 June the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought. It invited all States to devote the World Day to promoting public awareness to combat desertification and the effects of drought and the implementation of the provisions of the Convention.

32. The message of the Secretary-General on the occasion stressed that desertification and land degradation affect one third of the Earth's surface, threatening the livelihoods, well-being and development of as many as one billion people. He drew attention to the outcome of the seventeenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, which had indicated that desertification and land degradation were global problems that require a global response. The Secretary-General urged world leaders to provide such a response at their meeting in December in Copenhagen to seal the deal on climate change. He stressed that a comprehensive and equitable agreement to slow the pace of global warming must also help developing countries to adapt to the impacts already evident, by providing adequate and predictable financing to support improved land management, more efficient water use and sustainable agriculture. Since this year's observance of the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought highlights the growing threat to national and regional stability posed by desertification, he also suggested that it would be useful to recognize the security risks of letting desertification advance unchecked and to acknowledge that combating climate change could help to reverse desertification, increase agricultural productivity, alleviate poverty and enhance global security.

33. On the occasion of the World Day observance, various parties and organizations also hosted special events to demonstrate their strong advocacy for combating desertification and land degradation and mitigating the effects of drought.

9. Land Day

34. On Saturday, 6 June 2009, the secretariat hosted "Land Day" in Bonn to help climate change negotiators and other stakeholders attending the concurrent Bonn climate change talks consider in detail the linkages between climate change and desertification, land degradation and drought. The event was attended by over 170 participants and was structured around three panels: "How does sustainable land management support climate change adaptation?"; "What options can soil carbon sequestration offer for mitigating and adapting to climate change?"; and "Sustainable land management in climate change policy frameworks: what is the way forward?". Jeffrey Sachs, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Millennium Development Goals, delivered the keynote address.

10. Status of preparation of the next Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies

35. The ninth session of the Conference of the Parties is to be held in Buenos Aires from 21 September to 2 October 2009. In preparation for the session, regional preparatory meetings have been organized from 29 June to 3 July in Montevideo for Latin America and the Caribbean, 8 to 10 July in Rome for the Northern Mediterranean, 13 to 17 July in Bangkok for Asia, 22 to 24 July in Banja Luka for Central and Eastern Europe and 27 to 31 July in Tunis for Africa. The initial segment of the Session will be held from 21 to 25 September, followed by a special high-level segment on 28 and 29 September structured around three ministerial round-table discussions: the global trends of land degradation; climate change and desertification; and partnerships to mainstream these issues into economic stimulus packages. In accordance with decisions 13 and 18 taken at the eighth session, the first scientific conference of the Committee on Science and Technology under the Convention will be organized on the sidelines of the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties and back to back with the ninth session of the Committee, from 22 to 24 September and address the theme: "Bio-physical and socio-economic monitoring and assessment of desertification and land degradation, to support decision-making in land and water management".

11. United Nations Land

36. In accordance with the guidance provided in the ten-year strategic plan and to follow up on implementation paragraph 14 of General Assembly resolution 63/218, the secretariat has worked closely with UNEP and other relevant United Nations agencies, within the framework of the Environmental Management Group to identify the scope, modalities and deliverables of a Group process on land, including identification of time-bound issues that require a coordinated, system-wide contribution to the implementation of the ten-year strategic plan under the Convention.

37. To this end, a number of consultations have been held, including of the senior Group officials, who met in Poznan in October 2008. In addition, a technical

meeting of the Group was convened in February 2009 on the margins of the twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council of UNEP, and informal consultations were held in New York in May on the sidelines of the seventeenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

C. Recommendations

38. **The seventeenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development provided an intergovernmental forum to review the main issues at the core of the Convention and recommend policy options to effectively address desertification, land degradation and drought issues. In conjunction with Land Day, this served to rally more support for the Convention and the ten-year strategic plan and to position the Convention as one of the strategic responses to the various current global challenges and crises, particularly in addressing poverty eradication, food security and climate change.**

39. **The Assembly may wish therefore to make the following recommendations. It may wish to call for effective follow-up to the policy decisions taken at the seventeenth session, particularly to strengthen the institutional policy framework, implement practical measures to combat land degradation and desertification, and enhance capacity-building, technology transfer and financing.**

40. **The Assembly may also wish to consider calling on Governments and, where appropriate, in collaboration with relevant multilateral organizations, including Global Environment Facility implementation agencies, to integrate desertification and land degradation into their plans and strategies for sustainable development and to integrate national action plans related to drought and desertification into national development strategies.**

41. **The Assembly may further wish to recommend the promotion of scientific research and the strengthening of the scientific base on desertification and drought, which is essential for informed decision-making on sustainable land management and for measuring the results and monitoring the impact of programmes combating desertification.**

42. **The Assembly could consider recommending the mobilization of adequate, predictable and timely financial resources for the implementation of the ten-year strategic plan.**

43. **The Assembly might seek to support the integration of climate change adaptation and mitigation measures and disaster risk reduction strategies into agricultural and rural development strategies, and to support sustainable land management and action plans to mitigate the effects of drought and desertification, in particular in developing countries, in light of their anticipated effects on climate change.**

44. **Likewise, the Assembly may also wish to call for the strengthening of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification for the implementation of the ten-year strategic plan and to welcome the report of the Joint Inspection Unit and its findings. It may also wish to encourage coherence among United Nations programmes, funds, agencies and entities working on desertification, drought and land issues under the aegis of the Convention secretariat.**

III. Report of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity

A. Introduction

1. In its resolution 63/219, the General Assembly invited the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session on the work of the Conference of the Parties and to include in the report information on the preparation of the high-level meeting of the Assembly to be convened at its sixty-fifth session, in 2010, with the participation of heads of State and Government, as a contribution to the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010. The present report is submitted in response to that invitation, with a focus on issues of relevance and interest to the Assembly.

B. Preparation of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, Nagoya, Japan, 18-29 October 2010

2. Since its most recent report to the General Assembly in July 2008, the Bureau of the ninth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity held four meetings: Barcelona (October 2008), Berlin (November 2008), Nairobi (February 2009) and Paris (March 2009).

3. Pursuant to decision IX/12 of the Conference of the Parties, the seventh meeting of the Ad hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing was held from 2 to 8 April 2009, at the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in Paris. More than 600 delegates participated in the negotiations. As mandated, the meeting continued the negotiation of an international regime on access and benefit-sharing, focusing on drafting an operational text on objective, scope, compliance, fair and equitable benefit-sharing and access. Pursuant to the "Bonn Mandate" on access and benefit-sharing, three meetings of the Group of Legal and Technical Experts were convened. At the first meeting, held in Windhoek from 2 to 5 December 2008, participants discussed concepts, terms, working definitions and sectoral approaches. At the second meeting held in Tokyo, from 27 to 30 January 2009, the Group of Experts on Compliance, examined issues relating to measures that were available or that could be developed in public and private international law in order to ensure compliance with national access and benefit-sharing legislation, as well as mutually agreed terms regarding access and benefit-sharing. At the third meeting, held in Hyderabad, India, from 16 to 19 June 2009, the Group of Experts on Traditional Knowledge associated with genetic resources further examined the issue of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources in order to assist the Ad hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing. The eighth and ninth meetings of the Ad hoc Working Group will take place, respectively, in November 2009 in Montreal, Canada, and March 2010 in Colombia.

4. The sixth meeting of the Ad hoc Working Group on Article 8 (j) and Related Provisions will be held from 2 to 6 November 2009 in Montreal, Canada. Pursuant to paragraph 4 of decision IX/13 A, the Secretariat conducted an online discussion forum on article 10 (c) from 11 February to 11 March 2009, and compiled and

analysed case studies to provide advice to the Working Group on Article 8 (j), for its consideration, on how this related provision could be further advanced and implemented as a priority. In addition, a global indigenous peoples' consultation on the potential impacts of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation on indigenous and local communities was held from 12 to 14 November in Baguio, Philippines, in collaboration with the United Nations University — Institute of Advanced Studies Traditional Knowledge Initiative and Tebtebba.

5. Two meetings of the Ad hoc Technical Expert Group on Biodiversity and Climate Change were held during the period under consideration. Two ad hoc Internet-based discussion groups, established at the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, were also convened prior to the meetings of the Expert Group to assist in identifying major issues related to the items to be considered. The first Expert Group meeting, held from 17 to 21 November 2008 in London, addressed scientific and technical matters concerning the impacts of climate change on biodiversity and the links between biodiversity and climate change mitigation. The report of the meeting was transmitted to the fourteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Poznan, Poland. The second meeting of the Expert Group took place from 18 to 22 April 2009 in Helsinki where participants addressed the links between biodiversity and climate change adaptation. The main messages emerging from the meeting included the conclusion that adaptation activities that make use of biodiversity and ecosystem services (ecosystem-based adaptation) can, when integrated in an overall adaptation strategy, deliver a cost-effective contribution to climate change adaptation and generate social benefits. The meeting also considered the possible positive and negative impacts of adaptation activities on biodiversity and ecosystem services and proposed some methods to avoid maladaptation. Finally, the group concluded that the value of ecosystems and the services they provide should be taken into account when making decisions about, and providing appropriate incentives for, adaptation to climate change. The main messages from the second meeting of the Expert Group were made available to the participants of the thirtieth session of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific and Technological Advice of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change held in June 2009 in Bonn. A compilation report of the first and second meetings of the Expert Group has been made available for peer review and the final report will be submitted to the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in December 2009.

6. The ninth meeting of the Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions was held in New York on 14 May 2009. Participants took stock of the activities agreed at the previous Group meeting and further defined proposals for joint activities, in particular collaboration towards the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010.

7. The seventh meeting of the Liaison Group of the Biodiversity-related Conventions was held on 9 April 2009 at UNESCO headquarters in Paris. The meeting considered the contribution of the Liaison Group to the post-2010 biodiversity target.

8. The Environmental Management Group, chaired by the Executive Director of UNEP, established an Issue Management Group on the 2010 and post-2010 biodiversity targets, which held its first meeting in Paris on 8 April 2009. The Group was established to evaluate the potential of the United Nations system to support

Member States in advancing towards these targets and to prepare its inputs to the special session of the General Assembly in September 2010 and the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in October 2010 in Nagoya, Japan.

9. The Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety of Germany, in his capacity as the President of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, convened a high-level working group on the post-2010 biodiversity target in Bonn from 9 to 10 March 2009. With the participation of 50 eminent persons, the meeting provided an opportunity for participants to exchange ideas and views on the progress in achieving the 2010 targets, taking a critical look at why the 2010 targets are unlikely to be achieved, and to discuss the framework of the post-2010 biodiversity target and strong action on the future of the global biodiversity agenda. The outcomes of the working group are expected to contribute in shaping a strategic plan and post-2010 targets to reduce global biodiversity loss.

10. At the initiative of the President of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the First Global Private Donor Forum on Biodiversity was held on 3 June 2009 in Berlin. The meeting focused on options and opportunities for private financial commitment for global biodiversity conservation. Participants included high-level Government representatives, heads and senior staff of the United Nations and other organizations, a broad range of media and associations.

11. In partnership with the Chairman of the Group of 77 in New York, a brainstorming session of experts on a multi-year plan of action on biodiversity for development, based on a framework of South-South cooperation, was convened from 6 and 7 November 2008 in Montreal, Canada. Meeting participants reviewed the draft framework for South-South cooperation on biodiversity for full integration into the G-77 Development Platform for the South, and identified activities for inclusion in the multi-year plan of action on biodiversity for development.

12. The Global Partnership on Cities and Biodiversity was formally launched at the World Congress of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) on 7 October 2008 in Barcelona, Spain. The Global Partnership, facilitated by the secretariat of the Convention, brings together United Nations agencies, international organizations, including the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives and IUCN, as well as local governments. It aims to support cities in the sustainable management of their biodiversity resources, to assist cities in implementing practices that support national, regional and international strategies, plans and agendas on biodiversity, and to learn from existing initiatives. The first expert workshop on the development of the Singapore Index on Cities' Biodiversity was held from 10 to 12 February 2009 in Singapore which developed the Singapore City Biodiversity Index. A meeting on the development of guidelines for the preparation of the urban biodiversity strategy and plan of action will be held in Curitiba, Brazil, in November 2009. The Nagoya Biodiversity City Summit will be convened in October 2010, in conjunction with the high-level segment of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

13. The Expert Meeting on Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Development Cooperation was held from 13 to 15 May 2009 in Montreal, Canada. The meeting, which gathered some 45 international experts, set out to discuss how development agencies can better integrate biodiversity into their strategies, programmes and

projects. A meeting at the level of heads of agencies will be convened in conjunction with the high-level segment of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

14. In reference to decision IX/24 of the Conference of the Parties on a gender plan of action, a one-day workshop on validation of draft guidelines for mainstreaming gender into national biodiversity strategies and action plans was held on 12 May 2009 in Montreal, Canada. The objective of the meeting was to build understanding on the goals of mainstreaming gender into the strategies and action plans and the relevant mandate of the Convention on gender, raise awareness on the issue and determine the next steps in this regard.

15. During the reporting period, the Secretariat organized seven regional capacity-building workshops on national biodiversity strategies and action plans and mainstreaming biodiversity; a capacity-building workshop for South, South-East and East Asia on the Fourth National Report, and a workshop for least developed countries on the preparation of the Fourth National Report. Also convened were a meeting of the Liaison Group on the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation in Dublin; a workshop on Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) for the Caribbean region in Port of Spain; and a Pacific Region Workshop on Indigenous Communities, Tourism and Biodiversity: New Information and Web-based Technologies, in Apia.

16. The third meeting on Business and the 2010 Biodiversity Challenge will take place from 30 November to 2 December 2009 in Jakarta. The meeting will provide an opportunity to examine the biodiversity conservation mechanisms that can be adopted until 2010 and lay the groundwork for post-2010 biodiversity targets. A steering committee has been established for the preparation of the meeting, which will be followed by a dialogue between business representatives and key negotiators of the international regime on access and benefit-sharing to enhance understanding of their respective concerns with a view to advancing the negotiations on the regime.

17. The Consortium of Scientific Partners on Biodiversity held its third meeting on 21 October 2008 in Brussels. At the meeting participants took stock of the activities agreed at the second meeting and considered areas for potential contribution to the celebration of the International Day for Biological Diversity 2009 and the International Year of Biodiversity 2010.

18. The Chairs of the Scientific Advisory Bodies of Biodiversity-related Conventions and Rio Conventions will meet on 4 October 2009 in Nairobi to discuss their contribution to the post-2010 biodiversity strategy.

C. Preparation of the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, Nagoya, Japan, 13-16 October 2010

19. The Secretariat, in its preparations for the fifth meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, to be held in Nagoya, Japan, from 13 to 16 October 2010, gave a presentation on the implementation of its programme of work to the Bureau of the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the

Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety at its first meeting, held in Berlin on 27 November 2008. The adopted plan of intersessional activities includes:

(a) Meetings of the Group of the Friends of the Co-Chairs Concerning Liability and Redress in the Context of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety;

(b) Ad hoc discussion groups and regional real-time online conferences under the Open-ended Online Expert Group on Risk Assessment and Risk Management and two meetings of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Risk Assessment;

(c) Meetings of the Compliance Committee under the Protocol;

(d) Online forum on the need for and modalities of developing standards for the handling, transport, packaging and identification of living modified organisms;

(e) Meetings of the Liaison Group on Capacity-building for Biosafety and coordination meetings for Governments and organizations implementing and/or funding biosafety capacity-building activities;

(f) Meetings of the Informal Advisory Committee on the Biosafety Clearing-House;

(g) Development of the draft strategic plan for the Protocol and a methodological approach and indicators for the second assessment and review of the Protocol;

(h) Development of a draft programme of work on public awareness, education and participation concerning the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms.

20. The first meeting of the Group of the Friends of the Co-Chairs Concerning Liability and Redress in the Context of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety was held from 23 to 27 February 2009 in Mexico City. The second meeting is scheduled for February 2010 in Kuala Lumpur.

21. Pursuant to the request by the fourth meeting of the Parties, the secretariat launched an Open-ended Online Expert Group on Risk Assessment and Risk Management in November 2008 and convened ad hoc online discussion groups and four real-time online conferences for Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America with the view to providing input for the work of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Risk Assessment. The secretariat also convened the first meeting of the Expert Group from 20 to 24 April 2009 in Montreal, Canada. The second meeting of the Expert Group is scheduled for April 2010. The report of the Expert Group will form the basis for discussions at the Fifth Meeting of the Parties regarding further guidance on specific aspects of risk assessment and risk management and modalities for cooperation in identifying living modified organisms or specific traits that may have adverse effects on biodiversity, also taking into account risks to human health.

22. The online forum on the need for and modalities of developing standards for the handling, transport, packaging and identification of living modified organisms was held from 18 May to 5 June 2009.

23. The secretariat is currently in the process of preparing the draft strategic plan for the Protocol, the methodological approach and indicators for the second

assessment and review of the Protocol and the draft programme of work on public awareness, education and participation.

D. Preparation of the High-level Segment of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly

24. At its sixty-third session, the General Assembly decided to convene, as a contribution to the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010, a one-day high-level meeting of the General Assembly, with participation of heads of State, Governments and delegations. The high-level meeting would provide an unique opportunity, to raise awareness on the global crisis of biodiversity loss, the urgent need to implement the three objectives of the Convention and for world leaders to provide political impetus and support for a sustained global response to these biodiversity challenges, including the post-2010 Biodiversity Strategy as a contribution to sustainable development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, including poverty eradication. The fourth meeting of the Bureau of the ninth Conference of the Parties, held in Paris on 30 March 2009, considered its contribution to the organization of the high-level meeting. The Bureau was of the view that the convening of interactive panels might be conducive to engaging Heads of State and Government on issues related to biodiversity and that the themes for the panels should be strategic and clearly focused. The preparation of the high-level meeting was discussed with relevant United Nations senior officials, as well as with the President of the General Assembly.

25. The high-level event on biodiversity could be convened on 20 September 2010, immediately preceding the general debate of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly. The Assembly may wish to consider the convening of a limited number of interactive panels on strategic issues of relevance to the three objectives of the Convention, with particular emphasis on the post-2010 biodiversity strategy; the contribution of biodiversity to sustainable development and alleviation of poverty; and the relation between climate change and biodiversity. It may also wish to convene parallel interactive panels. A detailed information note on the organization of the High-level Segment will be made available to the Assembly in early 2010.

26. The panels could be co-chaired by Heads of State and Government, and reflect an equitable geographic representation, with heads of the relevant agencies moderating the panels. The Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of UNEP to be held in Bali, Indonesia, in February 2010 could provide a forum for the initial preparation of the themes to be discussed at the high-level event of the General Assembly. The panels will be convened immediately after a short opening ceremony. The summary of the discussion by the President is expected to contain a strong political message and will be submitted at the closure of the meeting and transmitted to the High-level Segment of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in Nagoya, Japan, from 27 to 29 October 2010.

E. Recommendations

27. **The General Assembly may wish to:**

(a) Encourage Governments and all relevant stakeholders and international organizations to contribute to the celebration of the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010;

(b) Decide, as a follow-up to General Assembly resolution 63/219, to convene a one-day high-level event on 20 September 2010 as a contribution to the International Year of Biodiversity with the participation of Heads of State and Government;

(c) Decide further that the event would be held in two regular meetings of the General Assembly with a limited number of parallel interactive panels on strategic issues of relevance to the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The outcomes of the discussions will be submitted at the closure of the meeting and transmitted to the High-level Segment of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in Nagoya, Japan, from 27 to 29 October 2010;

(d) Urge governments that have not acceded to the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to consider doing so as soon as possible.